



FROM THE PAGES OF SUPERMAN!



STEEL

BY L. SIMONSON,
BOGDANOVE,
BATISTA & FABER

REIGN OF TOMORROW!



DIRECT SALES



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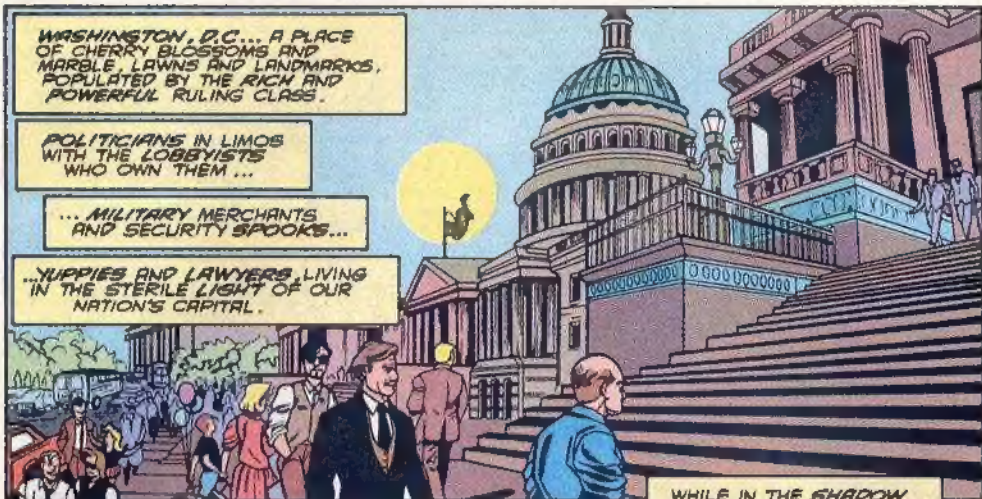
BOG & JANK 93

WASHINGTON, D.C... A PLACE
OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS AND
MARBLE LAWNS AND LANDMARKS,
POPULATED BY THE RICH AND
POWERFUL RULING CLASS.

POLITICIANS IN LIMOS
WITH THE LOBBYISTS
WHO OWN THEM ...

... MILITARY MERCHANTS
AND SECURITY SPOOKS...

...YIPPIES AND LAWYERS LIVING
IN THE STERILE LIGHT OF OUR
NATION'S CAPITAL.



WHILE IN THE SHADOW
OF POWER -- THE HOOD
OF DEECEE BOILS IN
POVERTY, DESPAIR AND
ANGER.

IN REAL LIFE,
HADES AND OLYMPUS
ARE BARELY MORE
THAN A BLOCK
APART.

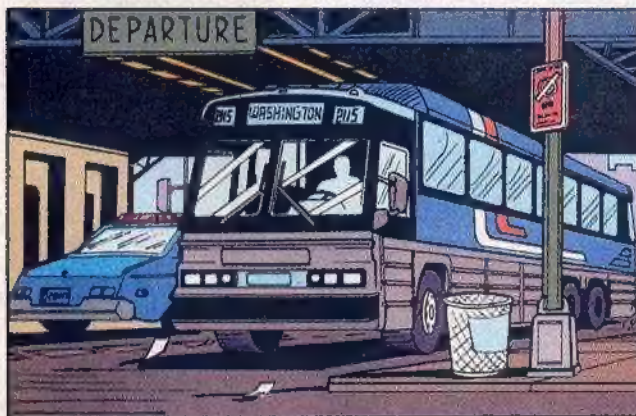


BETWEEN THESE
WORLDS THERE IS
A BUS STATION ...
WHERE A BUS FROM
METROPOLIS
IS ARRIVING.

PASSENGERS
DISEMBARK ...

SOME HAVE COME
TO VIEW THE
HALLS OF THE HIGH
AND MIGHTY.

OTHERS ARE
RETURNING TO
A PLACE THEY
CALL ...



"...HOME!"

EVEN AFTER
ALL THE YEARS
AWAY, IT STILL
FEELS LIKE...
SMELLS LIKE--
HOME!

HIS NAME IS
JOHN HENRY
IRONS--

--A MORTAL MAN
WHO HAS PROVEN HIM-
SELF CAPABLE OF FILLING
A SUPERMAN'S SHOES!

THE MAN CALLED--

STEEL

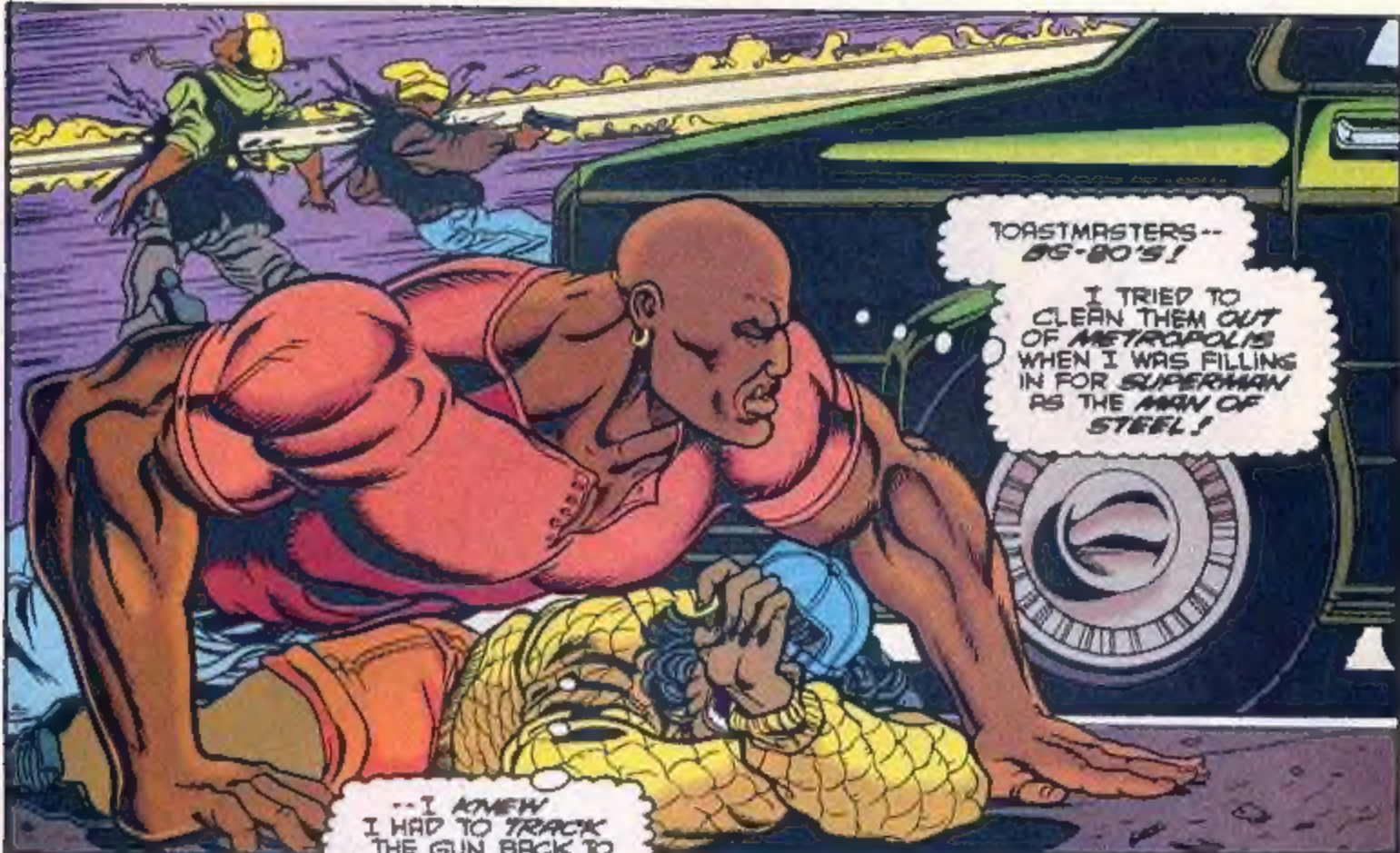
**WROUGHT
IRON**

WRITTEN BY JON BOGDANOVE
WITH LOUISE SIMONSON
PENCILLED BY CHRIS BATISTA
INKED BY RICH FABER
LETTERED BY PAT BROSEAU
COLORED BY GINA GOING
EDITED BY FRANK PITTARESE

STEEL CREATED
BY LOUISE
SIMONSON AND
JON BOGDANOVE







TOASTMASTERS--
85-80'S!

I TRIED TO
CLEAN THEM OUT
OF METROPOLIS
WHEN I WAS FILLING
IN FOR SUPERMAN
AS THE MAN OF
STEEL!

--I KNEW
I HAD TO TRACK
THE GUN BACK TO
ITS SOURCE!



KNEW I HAD
TO COME BACK
HERE-- WHERE IT
ALL STARTED!



BUT THIS GOES
WAY DEEPER
THAN I THOUGHT
IT DID WITH THE
WHITE RABBIT--!

BECAUSE NOW
THE WEAPONS I
HELPED CREATE
ARE KILLING
KIDS IN MY HOME
TOWN!

WELL, I'M
GOING TO
STOP IT!



THOSE BOYS
HAVE A LOT
TO ANSWER
FOR!

FIRST
THING IS TO
GET THE CAR
OFF THE
ROAD!--

-- I'M NOT A
BALLISTICS
EXPERT FOR
NOTHING!

KRUNK

DAMN
RIGHT I
CARRY A
HEAVY
BAG!

SCREEEEEEEE

BRAM



DAMN!
WHAT WAS
THAT?!

D-DON'T
KNOW... BUT
WE BETTER
CLUT, DUDE!

LOOK WHAT
THEY DID TO
MY CAR!

SOMEBODY
GONNA GET
EFFED-UP FOR
THIS, MAN!
WE GOT THE
TOAST!



WHAT
YOU'VE GOT IS
ABOUT TWO
SECONDS--

-- TO TELL ME
WHERE YOU'RE
GETTING THESE
GUNS!



LEAVE THEM
TO US, MAN!
THIS IS OUR
FIGHT!

BROK!



IT'S US
THEY
HIT!

THEY THINK
THEM GUNS
MAKE THEM
SUPREME!

THEY'RE
TRANS-
FORMING!
INTO
MONSTERS!

THAT GUNK
THEY'RE SWALLOW-
ING--*UNH*

CRASH!!



BUT THEY'RE
WRONG--
AAARGH

IT'S
PAYBACK
TIME!



DAMN!
IT'S TAR!
THEY GOT
TAR!

AIN'T NO
TAR-FREAKS
GONNA STAND
UP TO THE
TOAST!

FOOM



RRARR!



SHOOT ME
AGAIN, MAN--I'M
LAUGHIN'!

SKLUTCH

--I'M
SPLITTING
MY SIDES!

OR
YOURS!



NO!



YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THIS! YOU--

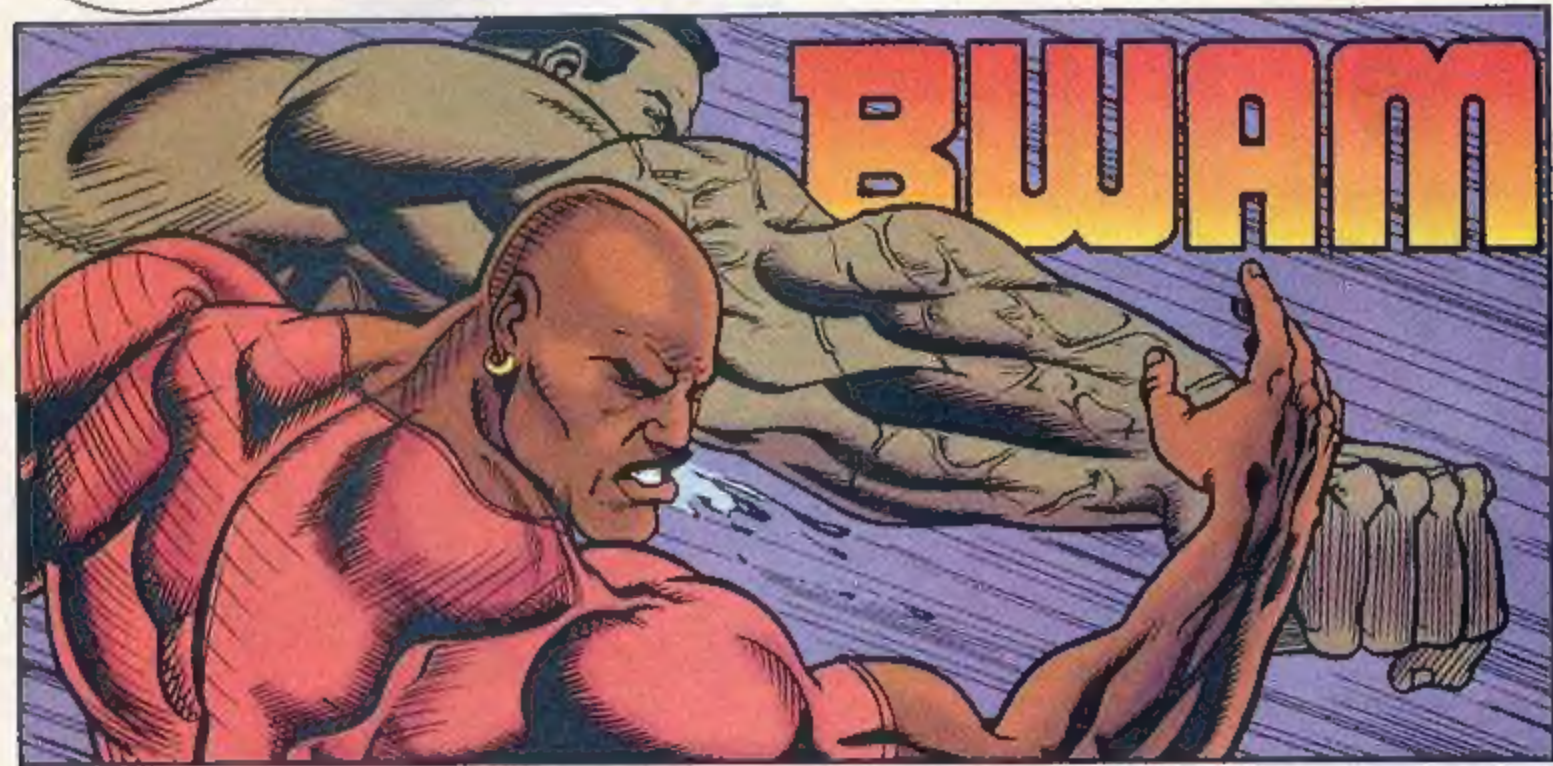


J-JEMAH!?

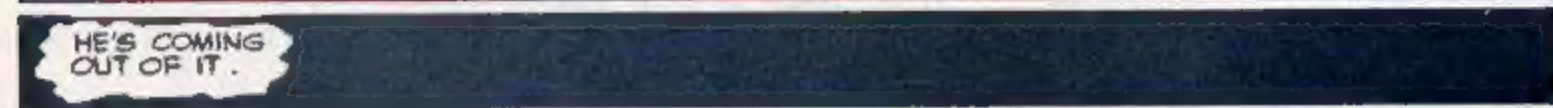


JEMAH!?

IT COULDN'T BE-- JEMAH!S NOT--



BWAM



HE'S COMING OUT OF IT.

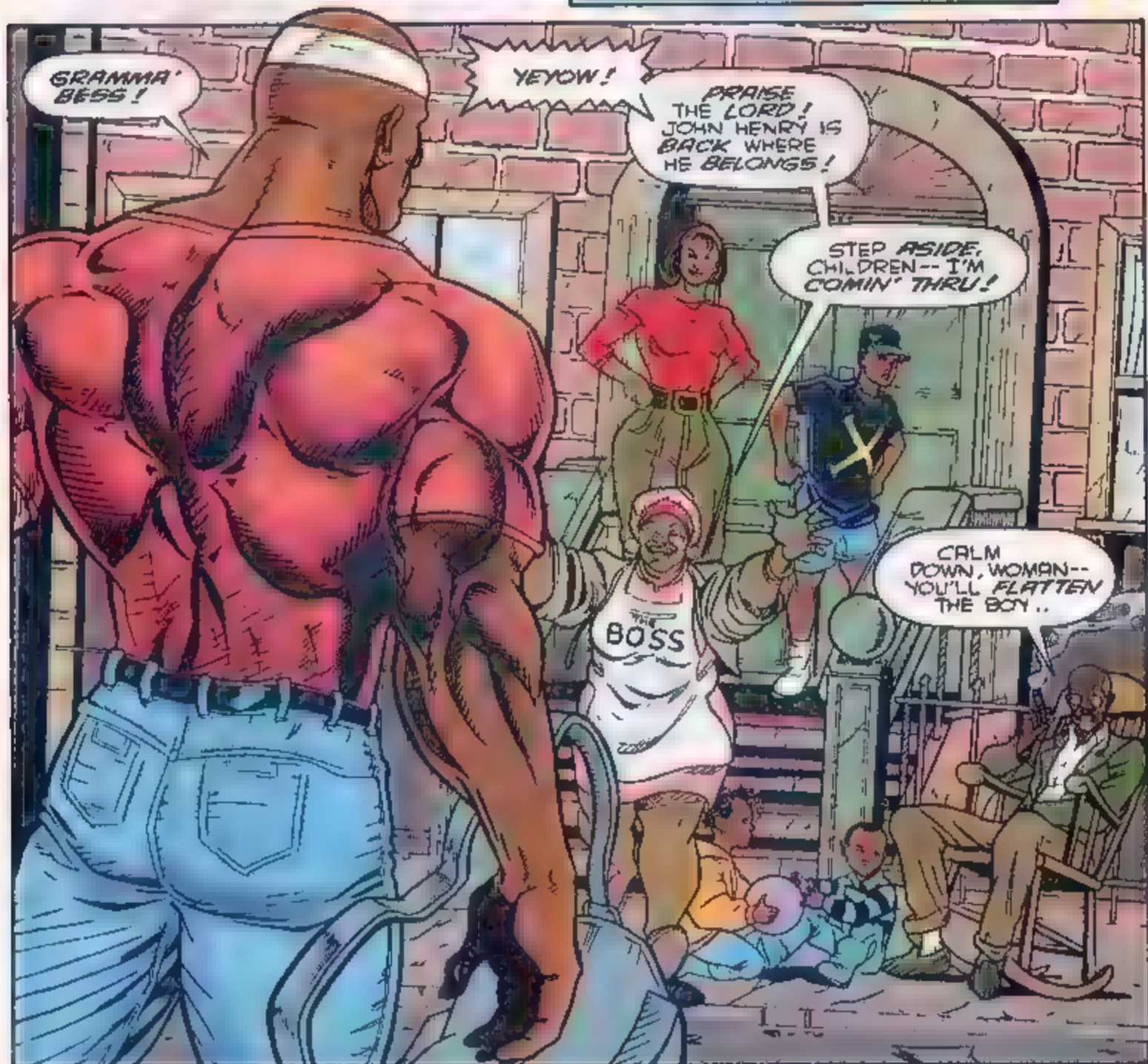
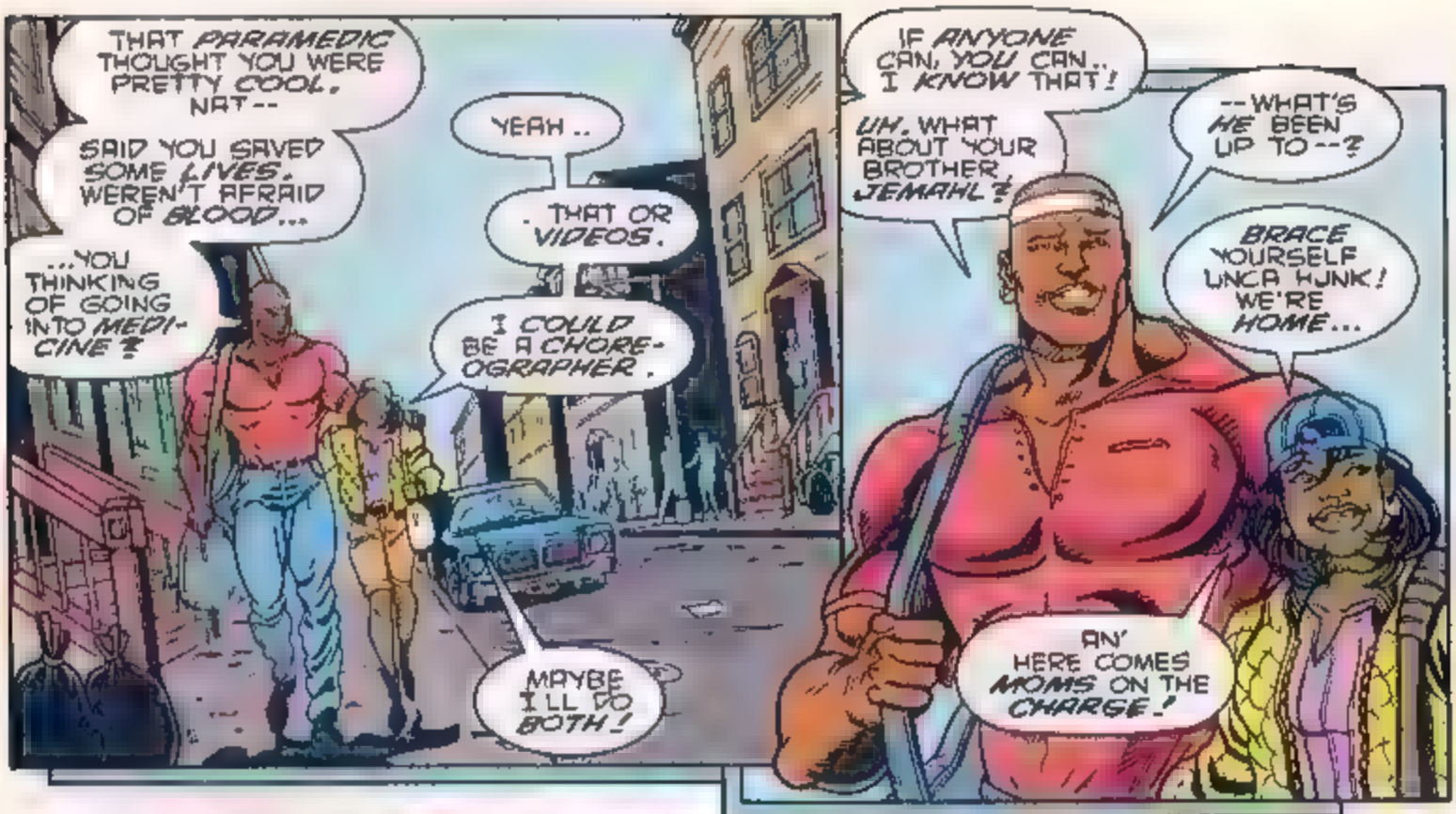


EASY, UNCA HUNK, YOU'RE SERIOUSLY CONCUSSED.

YOUR NIECE HAS BEEN A REAL HELP, PAL...

...SHE COULD HAVE A FUTURE AS AN E.M.T.!

BUT WHAT ABOUT HER BROTHER?



UH LINH.
BUTTER--NOT
OUR JOHN
HENRY! NOT
THIS MAN!

MOMS!
--I MISSED
YOU, MOMS!

I MISSED YOU
TOO, SUGAR. YOU
BEEN GONE TOO
LONGS!

SHE MEANS
SHE MISSED
THOSE HUGS!

NOT MANY
ARMS CAN
REACH ALL THE
WAY ROUND MY
BESS IN THIS
WORLD!

IT'S GOOD TO
SEE YOU,
BOY.

HOW
YOL BEEN,
POPS?

OH, AH MAY
BE RATTY--
BUT I'M STILL
NATTY!

RATTY
IS RIGHT--

BUT YOU
LOOKIN' MIGHTY
GOOD FOR A
DEAD GUY,
JOHN!

HOW COME
YOU BACK
SO FINE AND
HEALTHY?

YOU FINALLY DECIDE
TO QUIT RUNNIN' AND
HIDIN' LIKE SOME NO-
ACCOUNT CROOK?

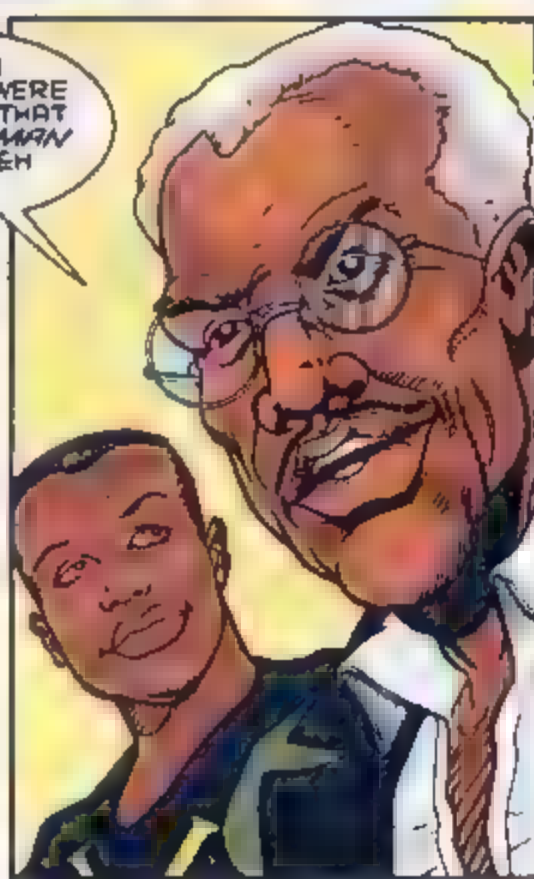
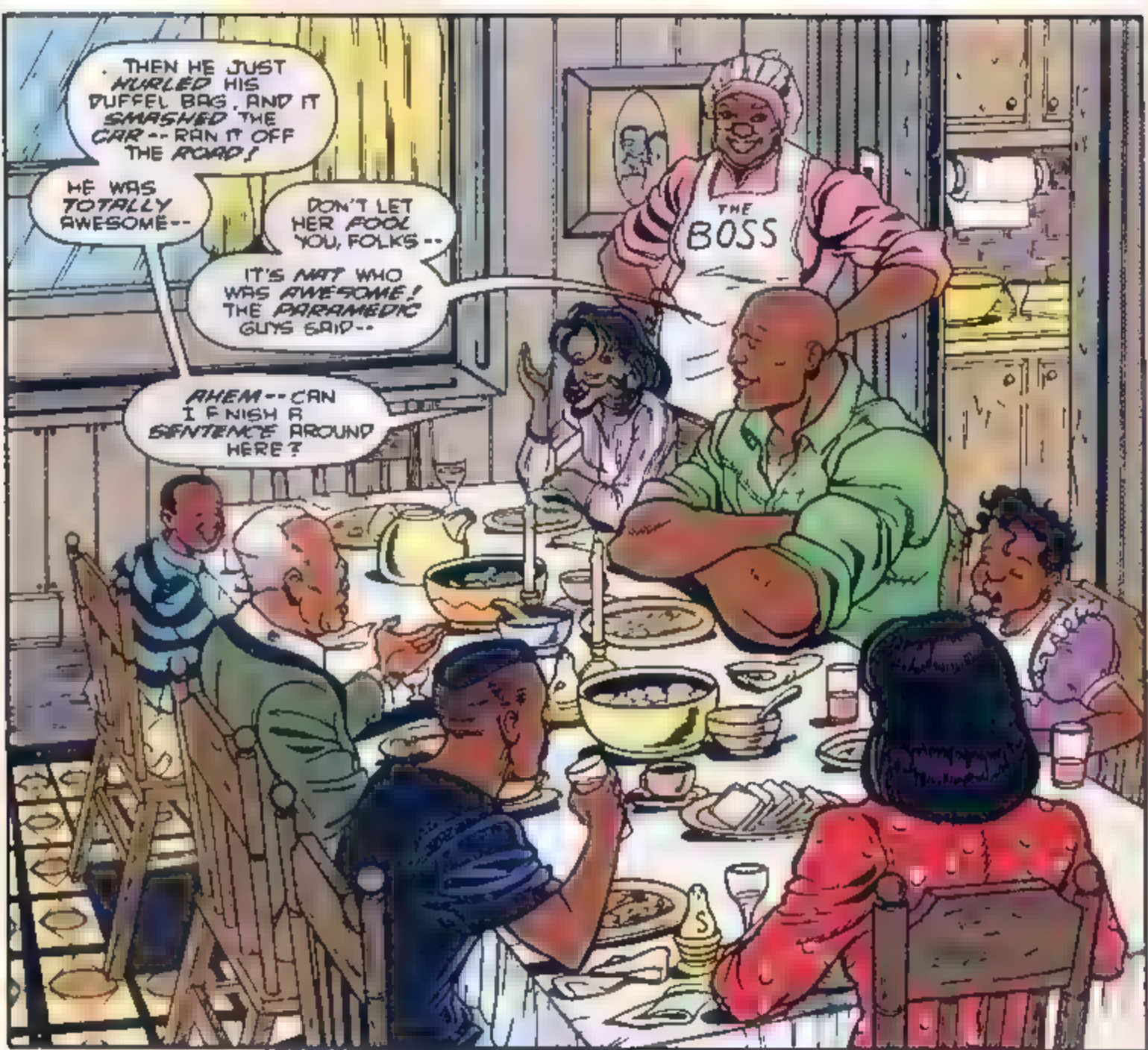
BESIDES,
IT'S BEEN
FIVE YEARS--
HEAT'S GOT
TO BE OFF BY
NOW.

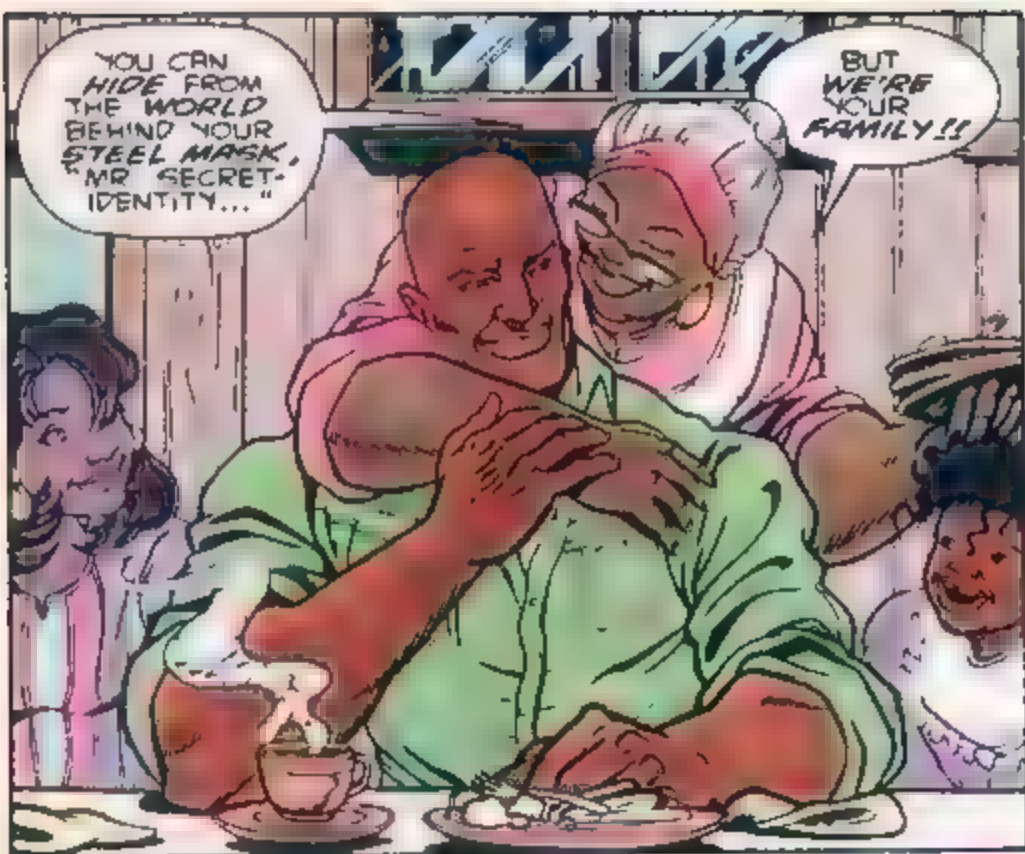
COULDN'T
STAY AWAY,
BLONDELL.

MY FAMILY
IS JUST MY
WEAKNESS,
I GUESS!

...YOU ONCE SAID IF A MAN
EVER SHOWED UP, LOOKED
LIKE THAT DEAD BOY,
JOHN HENRY, I SHOULD
CALL YOU AT THIS NUM-
BER...

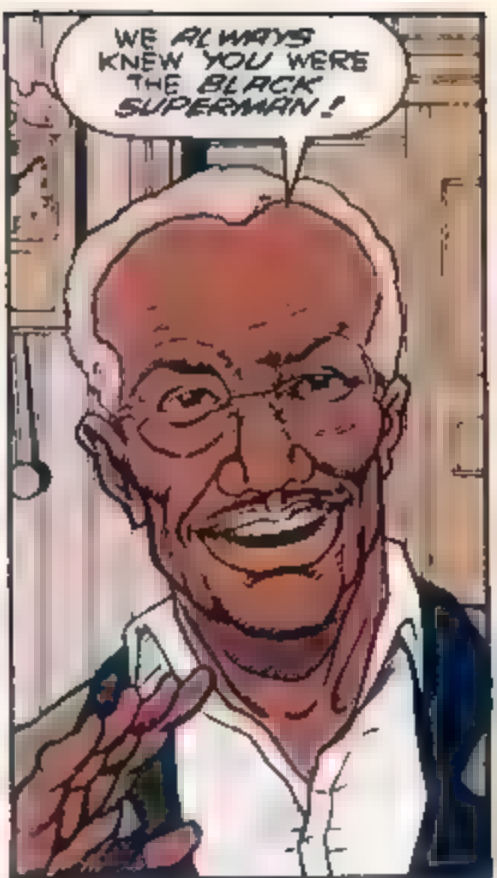
YOU SAID
YOU'D MAKE IT
WORTH MY WHILE...





YOU CAN HIDE FROM THE WORLD BEHIND YOUR STEEL MASK, MR SECRET-IDENTITY...

BUT WE'RE YOUR FAMILY!!



WE ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE THE BLACK SUPERMAN!



DON'T LOOK SO GOOFY, BOY-- WE'RE PROUD OF YOU

PLFF PLFF HI, EVERY-BODY!



SORRY I'M LATE!

THEY DON'T LET YOU CHECK ENCYCLOPEDIAS OUT OF THE LIBRARY!

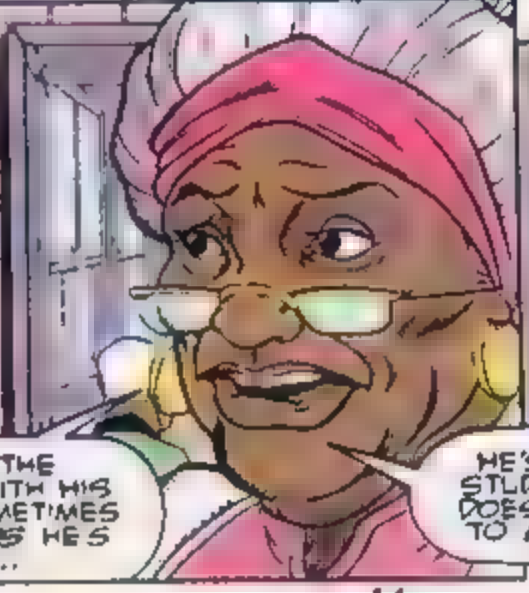


JEMAHL! GET YO' BONY BUTT UP- STAIRS AND WASH YOUR HANDS!

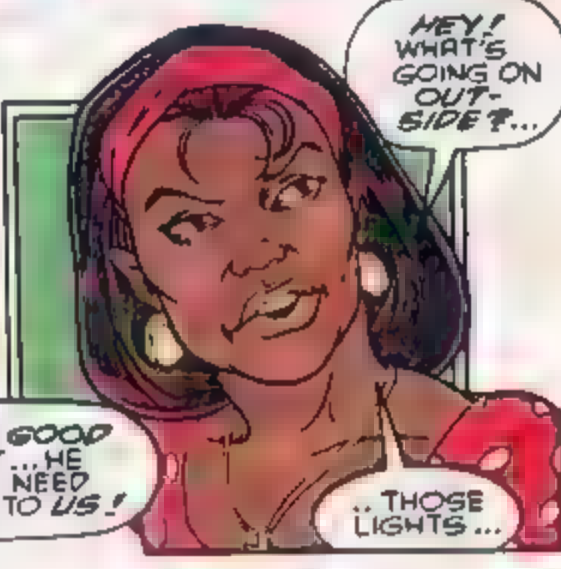
YOU KNEW WE WERE HAVING A WELCOME HOME PARTY TONIGHT!



JEMAHL BEEN TROUBLE LATELY MOMS?



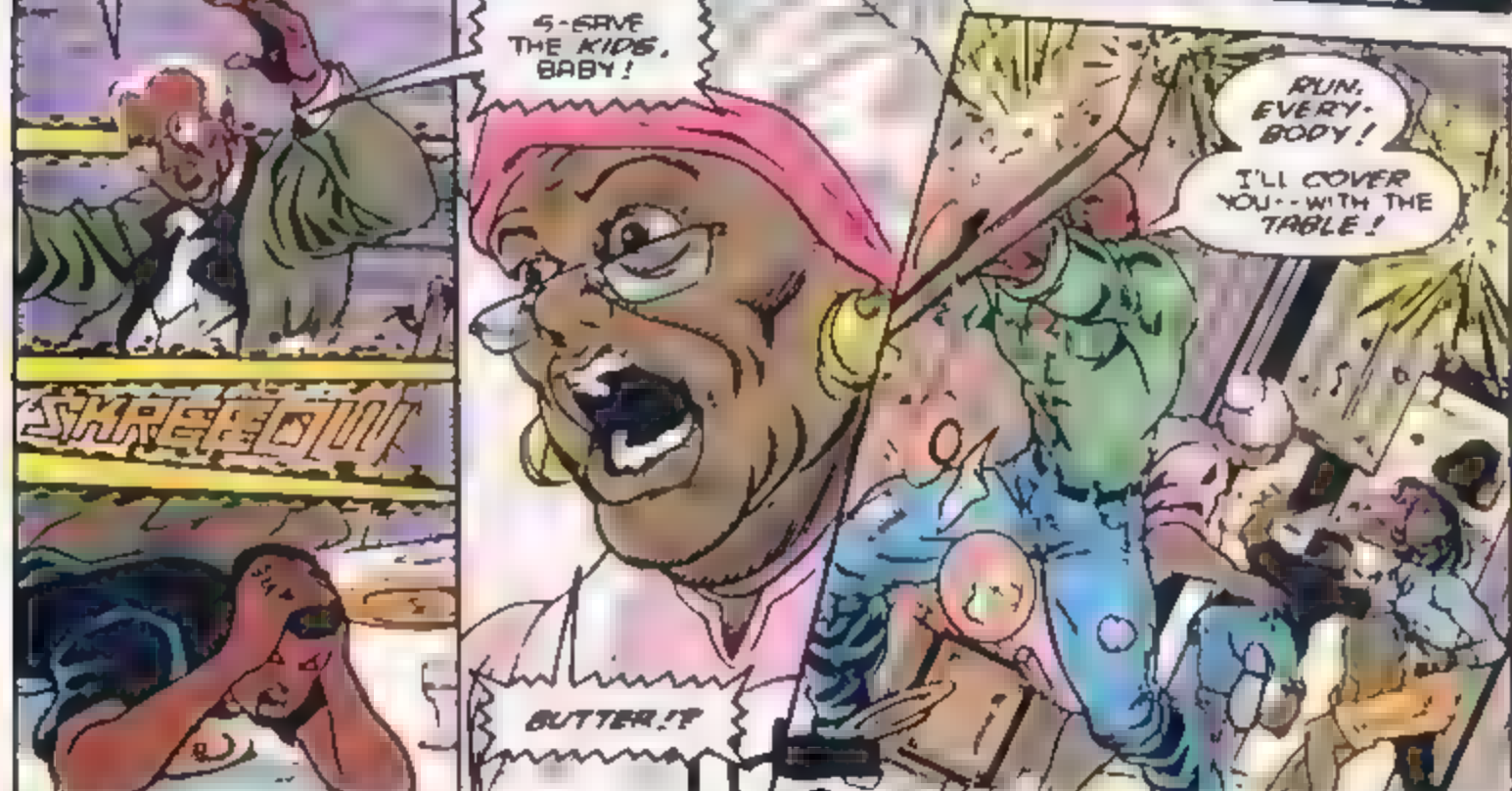
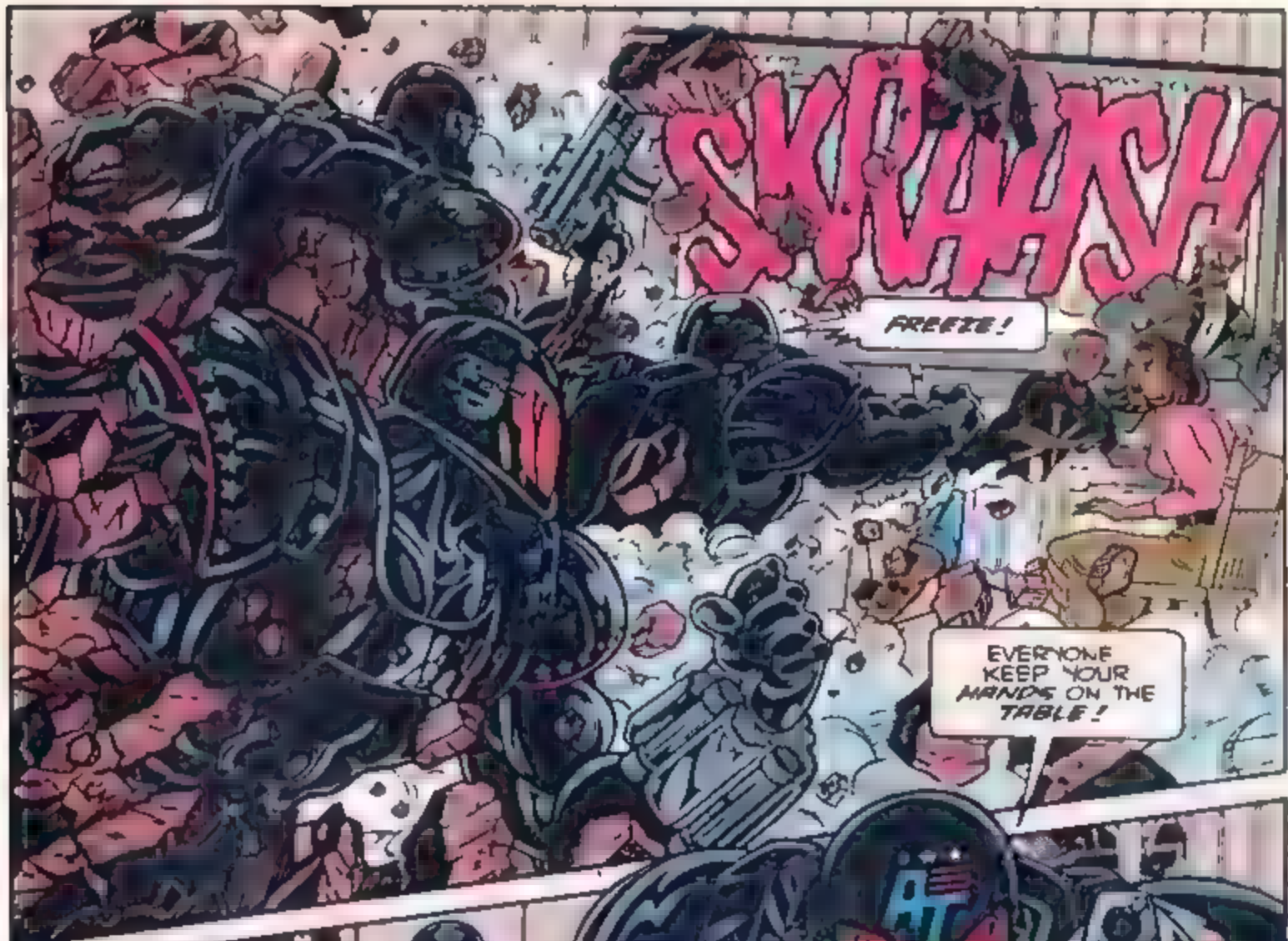
WE KNOW THE BOY HANGS WITH HIS FRIENDS SOMETIMES WHEN HE SAYS HE'S STUDYING ..



HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON OUT-SIDE?...

HE'S A GOOD STUDENT... HE DOESN'T NEED TO LIE TO US!

THOSE LIGHTS...





DR. IRONS...
YOU ARE UNDER
ARREST!

COME QUIETLY
AND YOU'LL CREATE
NO FURTHER
DANGER TO YOUR
FAMILY!

YOU'RE
NOT POLICE!
YOU'RE FROM
AMERTEK!

WHOM

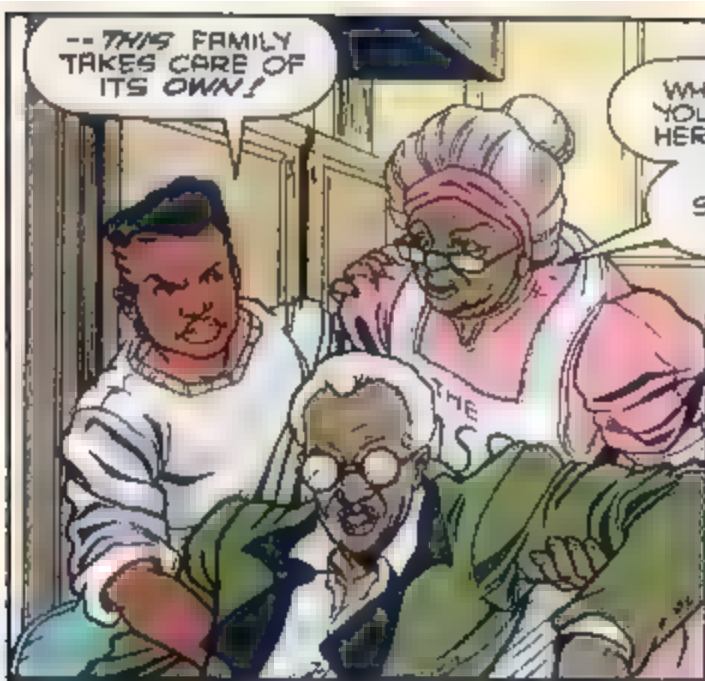
THIS OLD OAK
TABLE WILL WORK
AS A SHIELD
ONLY A COUPLE OF
SECONDS MORE --

-- BUT AS A
BATTERING
RAM!...?

LEMME
'LONE,
BABY GO
PROTECT
THE
KIDS!--

I CAN
TAKE CARE
OF MY-
SELF.

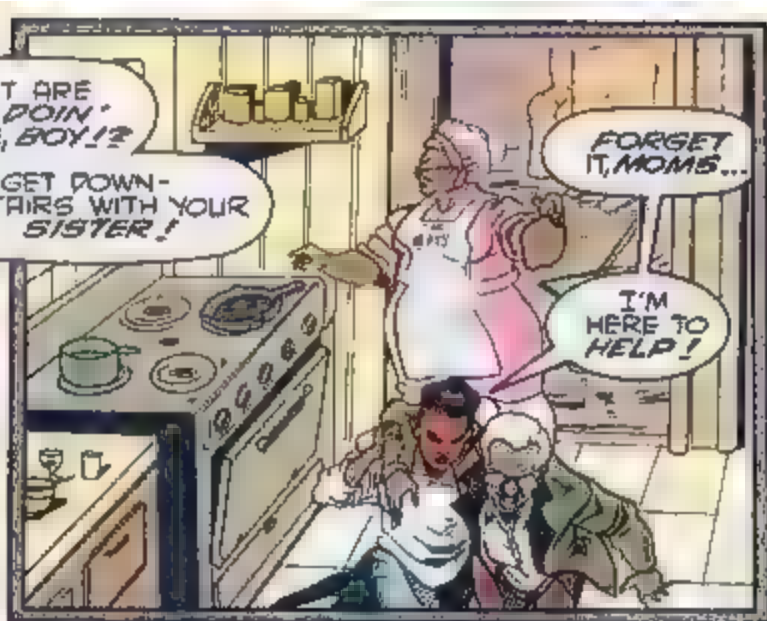
HUSH,
BUTTER--



-- THIS FAMILY
TAKES CARE OF
ITS OWN!

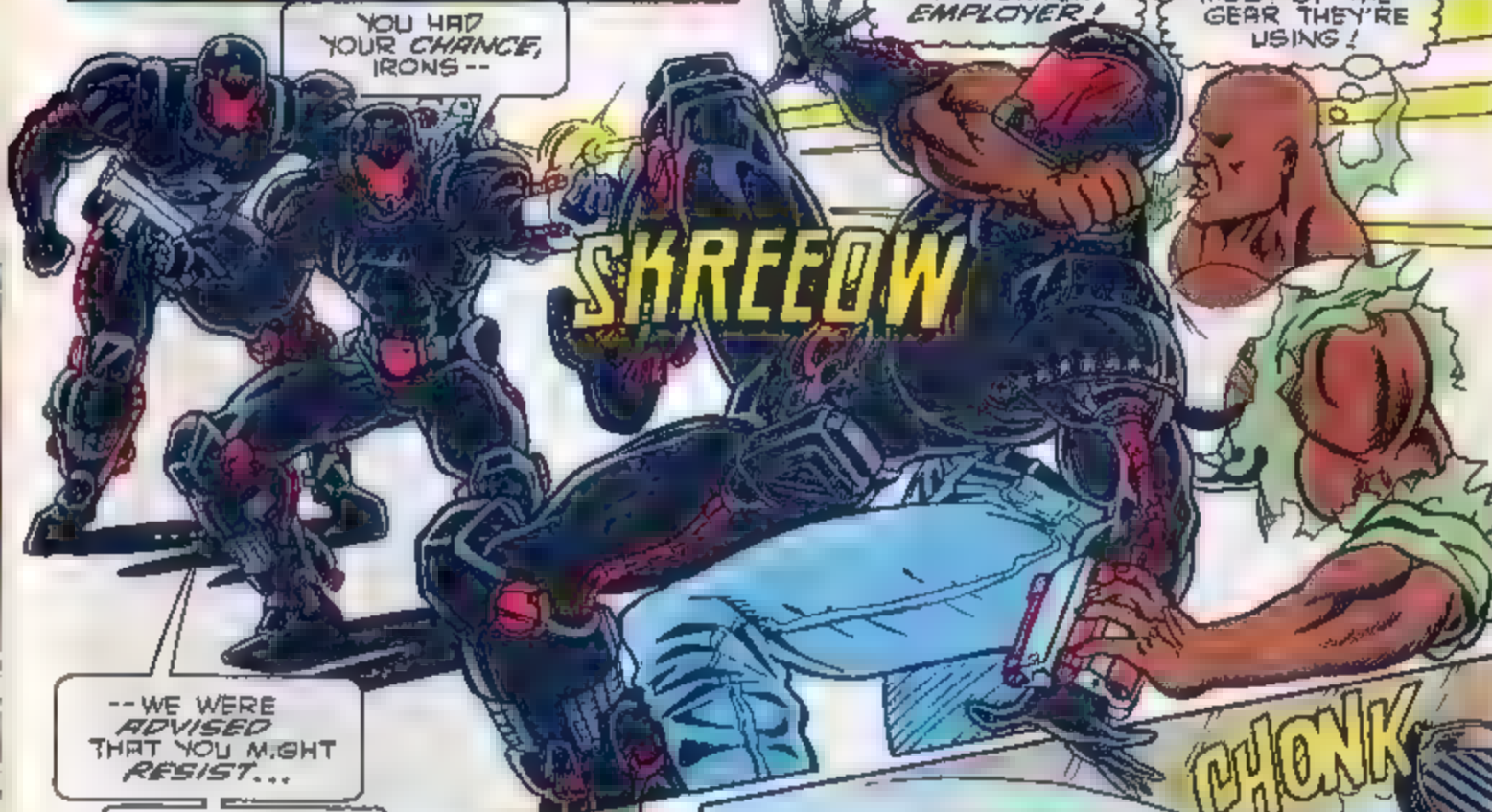
WHAT ARE
YOU DOIN'
HERE, BOY!?

GET DOWN-
STAIRS WITH YOUR
SISTER!



FORGET
IT, MOMS...

I'M
HERE TO
HELP!



YOU HAD
YOUR CHANCE,
IRONS --

AMERTEK,
MY FORMER
EMPLOYER!

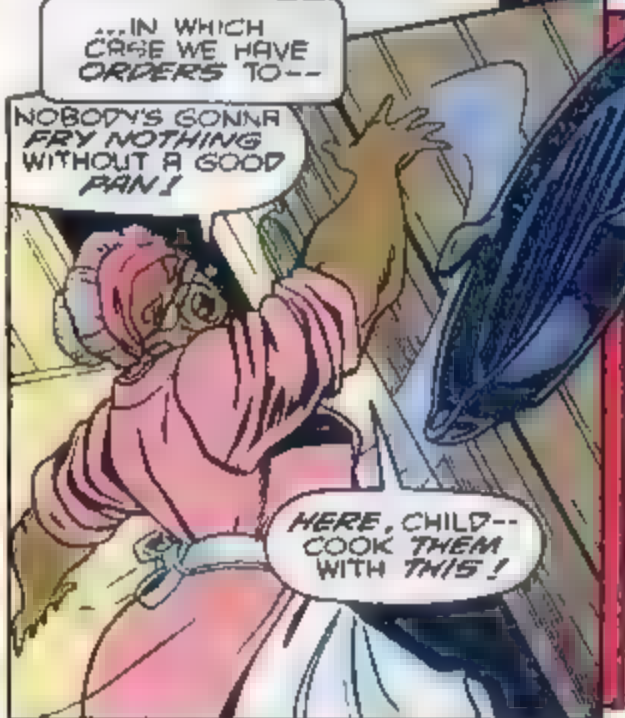
I DESIGNED
MOST OF THE
GEAR THEY'RE
USING!

SKREEOW

-- WE WERE
ADVISED
THAT YOU MIGHT
RESIST...

...IN WHICH
CASE WE HAVE
ORDERS TO --

NOBODY'S GONNA
FRY NOTHING
WITHOUT A GOOD
PAN!

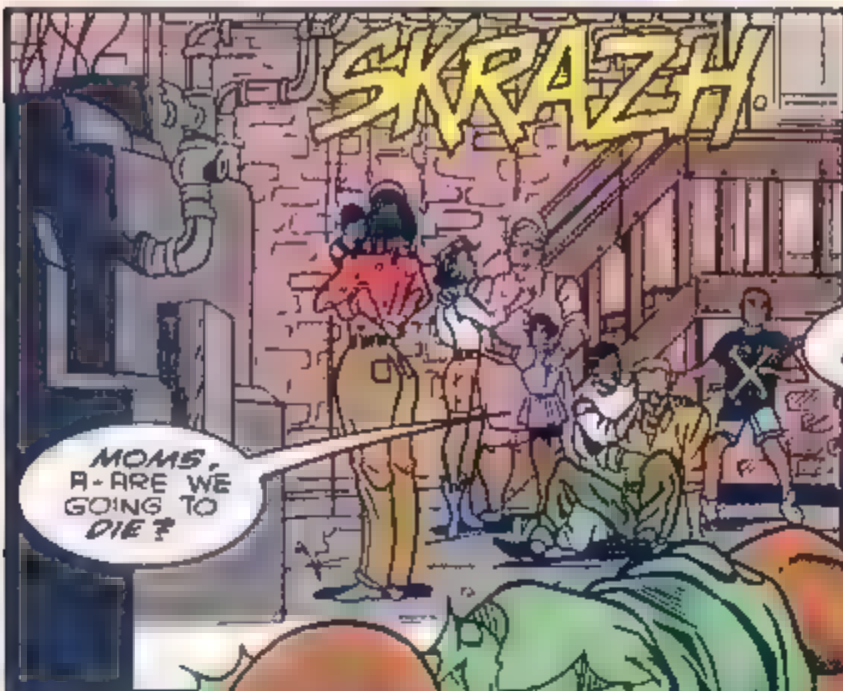


HERE, CHILD --
COOK THEM
WITH THIS!



STILL GOT
PERFECT
PITCH, MOMS!

THANKS!



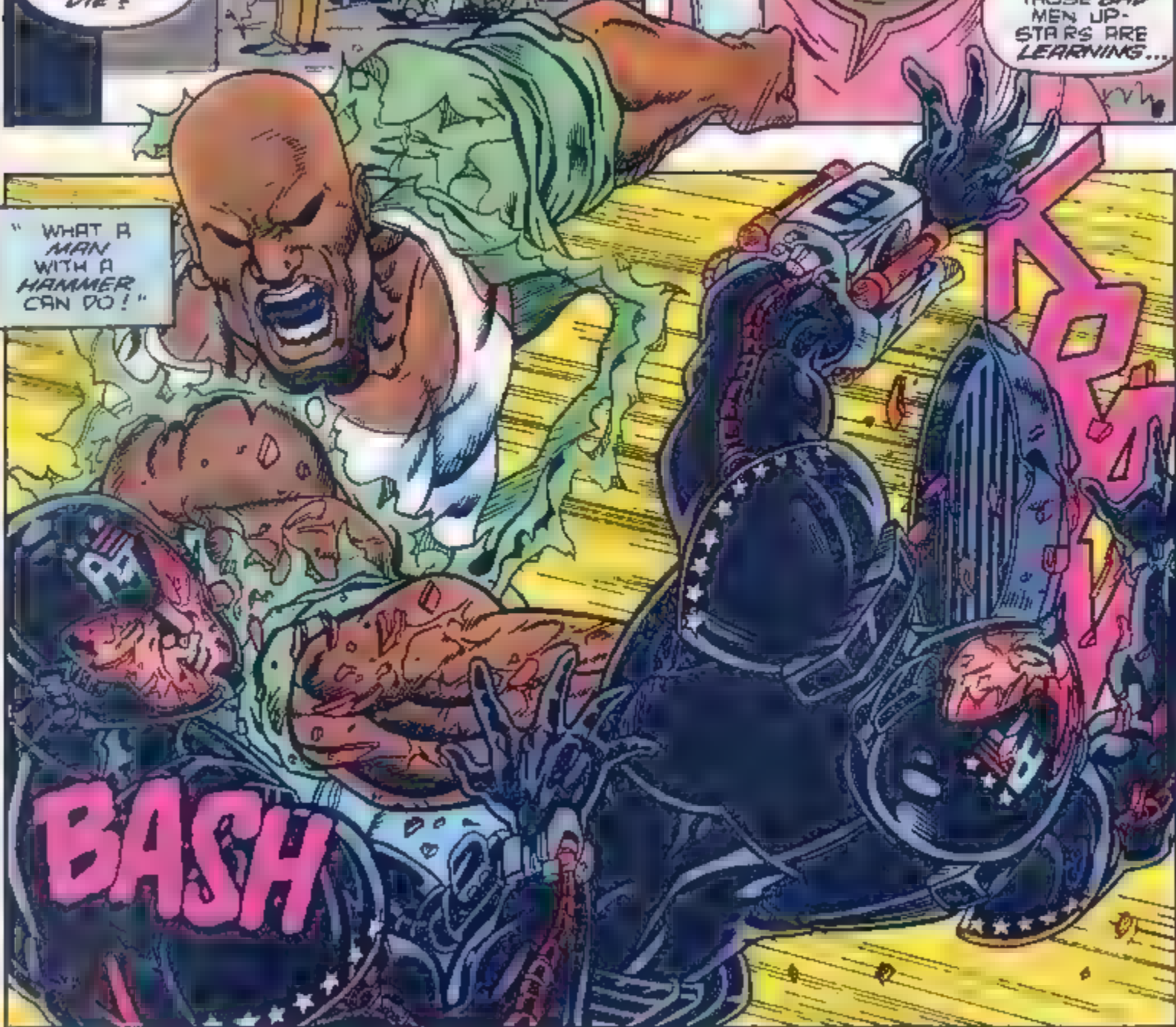
SKRAZZH

MOMS,
A-ARE WE
GOING TO
DIE?

NO
CHILD!

DARLENE, YOU AND
YOUR BROTHER PACO
ARE TOO LITTLE TO
REMEMBER OUR JOHN
HENRY--

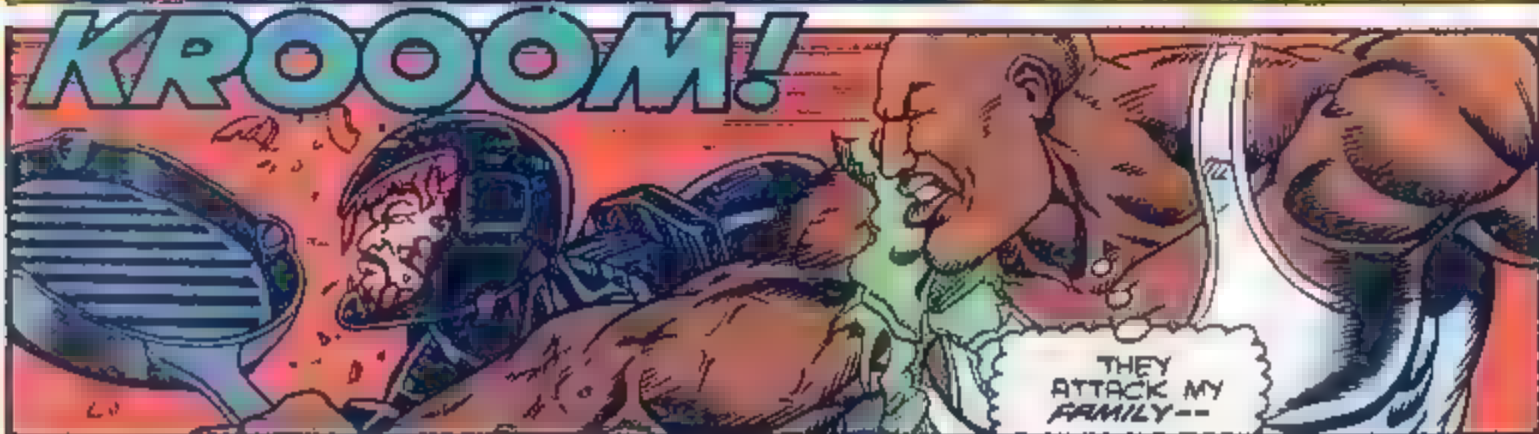
--BUT
THOSE BAD
MEN UP-
STARS ARE
LEARNING...



"WHAT A
MAN
WITH A
HAMMER
CAN DO!"

BASH

KROO



KROOOM!

THEY
ATTACK MY
FAMILY--

-- WITH
WEAPONS
OF MY
DESIGN!

THIS
IS MY
FAULT!

YOUR
GRANDFATHER'S
GOING TO BE
OKAY, HONEY--

-- HE WASN'T
SERIOUSLY
HURT, AND
WHATEVER THEY
SHOT HIM
WITH--

-- WELL, IT
CALTERIZED
THE WOUND
ON THE WAY!

IT'S MY
FAULT HE'S
HURT!

NOW
HUSH--

THESE ARE
AMERTEK
GOONS-- USING
VERSIONS OF MY
HARDWARE!

I SHOULD
HAVE KNOWN
THIS WOULD
HAPPEN!

BY COMING
HOME, I'VE
DOOMED
YOU ALL!

WE'VE
LIVED IN
DANGER
BEFORE

NO!

GRANDMA
BESS, NO!

I MADE
THIS MESS--

I'LL
CLEAN IT
UP!

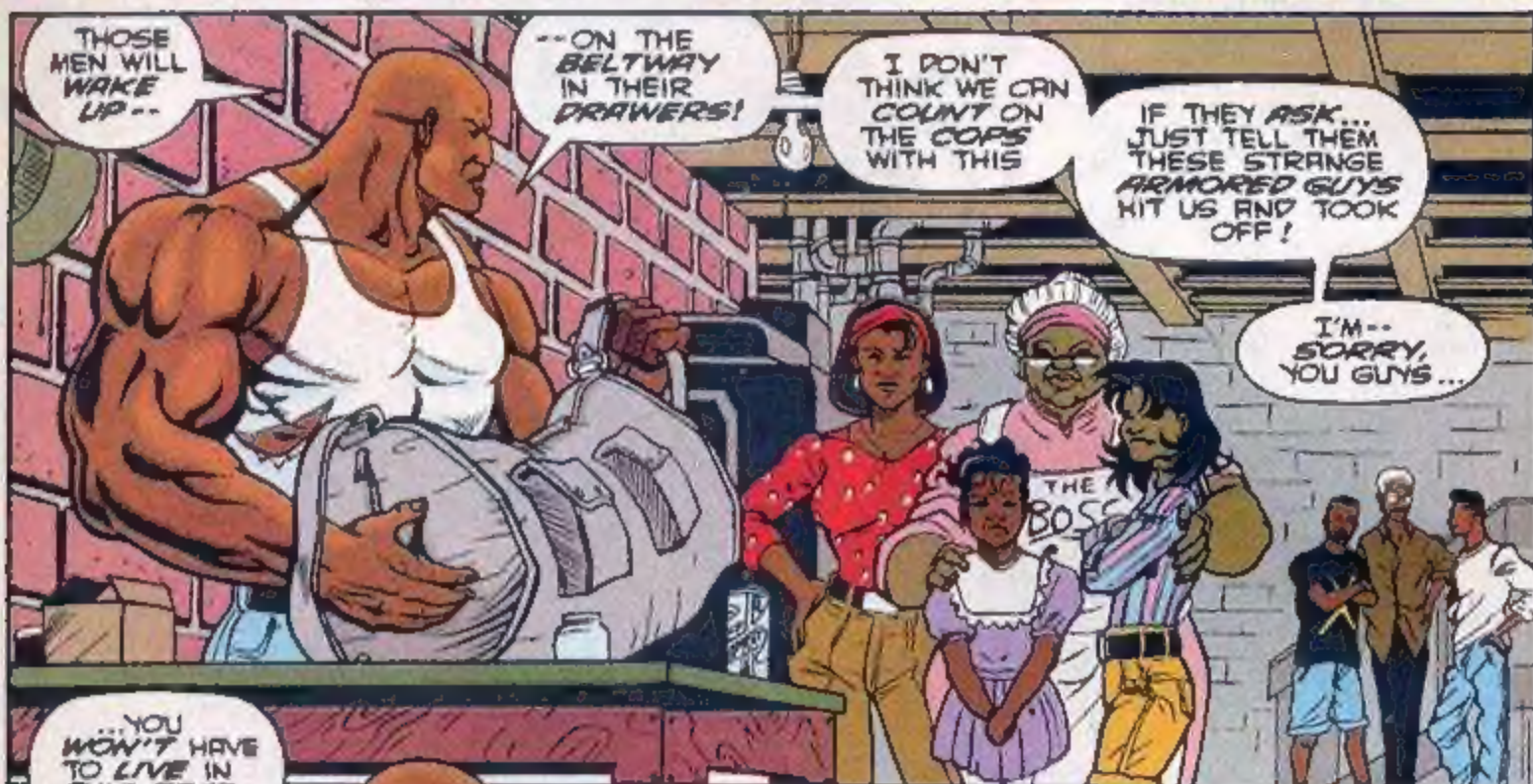


I CAN
USE THIS
MATERIAL--

--AND
IMPROVE
IT...



...I'VE
REFINED THE
PROCESS SINCE
I DEVELOPED
THIS
VERSION!



THOSE
MEN WILL
WAKE
UP--

--ON THE
BELTWAY
IN THEIR
DRAWERS!

I DON'T
THINK WE CAN
COUNT ON
THE COPS
WITH THIS

IF THEY ASK...
JUST TELL THEM
THESE STRANGE
ARMORED GUYS
HIT US AND TOOK
OFF!

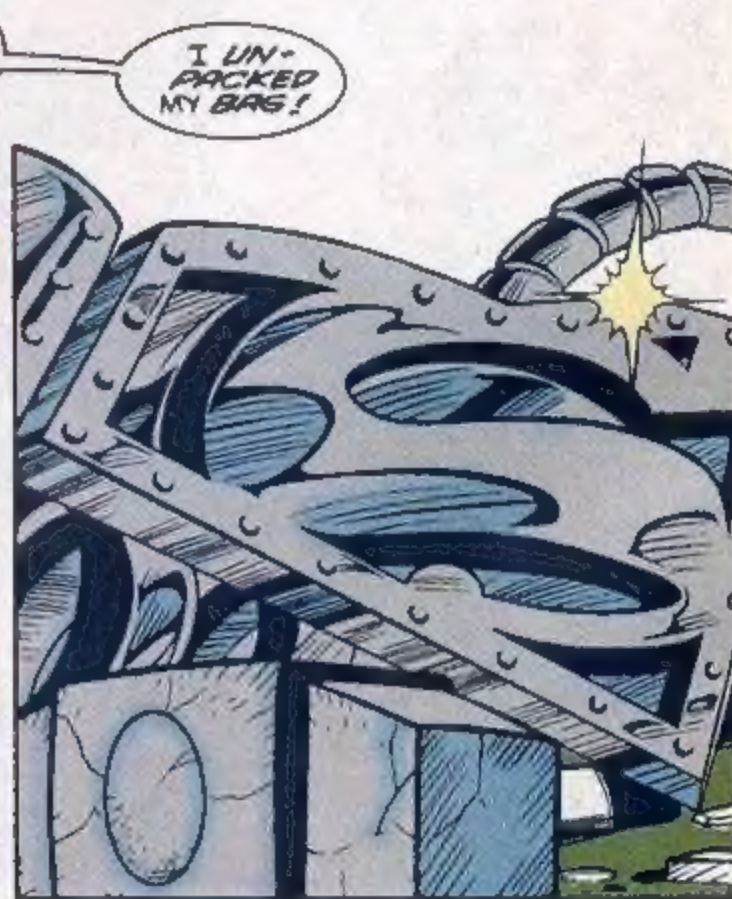
I'M--
SORRY,
YOU GUYS...



...YOU
WON'T HAVE
TO LIVE IN
THIS BASE-
MENT--

--NOT IF I
CAN USE
IT AS A
WORKSHOP
AGAIN.

I GUESS
IT'S
TIME--



I UN-
PACKED
MY BAG!

DAYS LATER,
THE RUDDY
GLOW OF DAWN--

--IS ECHOED IN
THE HOT BLAST OF
A FURNACE--

--AND THE COLOR
OF A MAN'S
THOUGHTS.

I PROMISED
SUPERMAN TO
MAKE MY LIFE COUNT
FOR SOMETHING...

...BUT MY
INVENTIONS
CONTINUE TO
MAKE IT COUNT
FOR DEATH AND
SUFFERING!

NOW MY
TERRIBLE
LEGACY
IS LEVELED
AT MY
FAMILY!

HOW MUCH WILL
IT TAKE TO
BALANCE THE
SCALES?

IN THE "SHADOW
OF OLYMPUS,"
A MODERN
HEPHAESTUS
WORKS AT HIS
FORGE--

-- POUNDING
NEW STEEL
OUT OF OLD!

UNTIL ...

WHERE'S
THE "S"
SHIELD?

I...
CAN'T WEAR
IT, MOMS--
--I DON'T
DESERVE
TO!

I'LL FIGHT FOR
TRUTH AND
JUSTICE... BUT MY
FIGHT MAY HAVE
TO BE OUTSIDE
THE LAW.

WELL, YOU ARE
GOING TO WEAR--
THIS!

YOU ARE
THE **BLACK**
SUPERMAN AS
FAR AS I-- OR
ANYBODY
ELSE HERE IS
CONCERNED!

"DON'T
YOU EVER
FORGET
THAT,
JOHN
HENRY
IRONS--"

"... EVEN IF THE
REST OF THE
WORLD COMES TO
KNOW YOU AS ..."

"...THE MAN CALLED

STEEL

STEEL

DC COMICS

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Hello there, and welcome to the first issue (and first letters page) of STEEL! Right here is the place where you can write to us and tell us what you think about the solo adventures of John Henry Irons! Tell us what you loved, tell us what you hated, and tell us what you'd like to see happen to Washington D.C.'s latest defender!

Steel's life is already in a state of turmoil. His nephew is involved with street gangs equipped with Toastmasters! His former employer wants him dead! His return has endangered his family! And things are gonna get a lot worse before they get better! Over the course of the next year we'll learn a bit more about John's mysterious past, and Steel himself will reach an incredible milestone in his life. There'll be plenty of action, excitement and danger as John learns what it takes to be a hero.

So stick around and write us some letters! Who knows? You might see your name right here!

column" contest, so here are my suggestions: Steel Workers, Tempered Steel (so what if it's being used. It's not like the staff of MAN OF STEEL will sue), Stainless Steel, Steel Machine, Rust in Peace, Steel Column.

Yours impatiently,
Matthew Rogerson
152 Ashfield Road
Rochdale, Lancs OL 11 1QH
England

Easy, Matthew...easy. Your impatience has paid off. Here's STEEL #1, hot off the presses!

As you can see, John Henry hasn't retired, although what he told Superman wasn't a lie. Circumstances have driven him to forge this new (but S-shieldless) armor, and no doubt to change his outlook on life. Now, aside from bearing the burden of responsibility for the creation of the Toastmasters, John will have to deal with the fact that his return has put his family in mortal danger.

As for joining the JLA or any other team, that's a bit of a way off. John has enough on his hands right now, and I don't think he can afford to leave Washington D.C. for any great length of time (unless, of course, he were to visit Metropolis—stay tuned). But you never know when or where he might make a guest appearance. If he's needed, Steel will be there!

And thanks for the lettercolumn suggestion! Unfortunately, we'll have to ask for your impatience just a little bit longer (yep, right here's where we mention the infamous "Name the Lettercolumn" contest! Send those cards and letters in!) But you're not out of the running yet, Matthew! Keep your eyes on this page!

WHO'S WHO BEHIND THE SCENES:

JON BOGDANOVE, co-writer and co-creator of Steel, has been in the comics biz for more than a decade, having worked on *Power Pack*, and *Fantastic Four vs. The X-Men*. His most notable credit, though, would have to be as penciller on *SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL*, where he brings his dynamic vision of Supes to life month after month. Jon lives in Maine with his wife, Judy, and their son (and future Superman artist) Kai-El.

LOUISE SIMONSON, co-writer and co-creator of Steel, has a vast amount of comic-book experience under her belt. A former editor at both Warren and Marvel, Louise created *Power Pack*, wrote *X-Factor* and *New Mutants*, and has been writing *SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL* since its inception in 1991. Most recently, she's celebrated the pub-

lication of *SUPERMAN: DOOMSDAY & BEYOND*, a novel adapting Superman's greatest battle and its aftermath, published by Bantam Books.

CHRIS BATISTA lives in Manhattan with his three cats. He's pencilled several books for Marvel, including *X-Men Adventures*. He has a secret desire to draw Superboy (and he has the sunglasses to prove it), and he'd like to dedicate his work on this series to fellow artist (and former teacher) Klaus Janson.

RICH FABER studied cartooning at the School of Visual Arts in New York, where, strangely enough, he met Chris Batista. This is Rich's first ongoing assignment in comics (after lending a brush to half of *LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES* #50). Rich would like to extend special thanks to his family and friends for all their support, and he dedicates this issue to the memory of George M. Faber.

PAT BROSEAU has added his distinctive style to numerous DC titles, lettering the *MARTIAN MANHUNTER* miniseries, the *BATMAN: IN DARKEST KNIGHT* Elseworlds, as well as *LEGIONNAIRES* on a monthly basis. We're glad to have him aboard!

GINA GOING's sharp eye for color has given a terrific look to several DC titles including *FLASH* and *GREEN ARROW*, as well as *Fantastic Four* (or is it "Three"? for those folks downtown. STEEL is the latest monthly title she's taken an airbrush to. Pretty cool, huh?

FRANK PITTARESE, your editor, lives in Brooklyn with his VCR. In his five years at DC, Frank has gained lots of experience, working first in the Special Projects department, and later working as the assistant on *L.E.G.I.O.N.* '93 and *NEW TITANS*. Currently associate editor on the Superman titles, Frank finds it incredibly difficult to talk about himself in the third person.

NEXT ISSUE: When Jemahl's turf war spins out of control, he finds himself in the "custody" of the deadly Amalgam, who suspects that Jemahl knows a little more about Steel than he ought to. Will John Henry find his nephew in time to prevent his secret identity from becoming public knowledge? Or will the Irons family have to attend a double funeral? Plus, more on the mysterious Amertek corporation and its ties to Steel's past!

This issue's cover was pencilled by Jon Bogdanove, inked by Dennis Janke, and colored by Les Dorscheid.

Dear Editor:

Impatience. I impatiently awaited Superman's return from the moment he was "offed" by Doomsday. Impatience. I impatiently awaited the discrediting of three of the four Supermen, only to see all four discredited and the one, true Superman arise once more. Now I impatiently await the three new titles that "Reign of the Superman" spawned, and STEEL is certainly at the top of my list.

In *MAN OF STEEL* #28, John Henry Irons told Superman he was retiring from the "steel-suited superbeing" business, but this is obviously a lie, or the new book would be called "John Henry." So, I suppose I can safely await a new and improved suit for Mr. Irons. Await it impatiently, that is. I think you should still keep the S-shield, the cape, the steel spikes and the hammer, as all of this makes him look kind of regal.

Impatient suggestions: Once he's sorted out the moral implications of his crusades (i.e., his link to the Toastmasters), John Henry should definitely join the JLA. Someone with his awesome capabilities, along with his experiences in the business world (through the company that produced the Toastmasters) will provide an equal balance to the rampaging actions of Guy Gardner and Maxima. I think he should help Superman every now and then (he would have made a great addition to the "Spilled Blood" storyline), and he should definitely fight Razer (from *FLASH* #84 and #85). Razer's lubrilon-coated armor would be more than a match for the Man of Steel and, therefore, it would be a way cool battle.

I impatiently await all of the above. Impatience. I'm too impatient to wait for the customary "Name the Letter-